

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-13  
CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 /131 W  
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P 201302Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0751  
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
USINT HAVANA  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY SANA  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 08354

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, UR, ET  
SUBJECT: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL DESCRIBES MENGISTU VISIT  
TALKS  
REF: (A) MOSCOW 7074 (NOTAL), (B) MOSCOW 7031 (NOTAL),  
(C) MOSCOW 6502 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL ADMITS THAT MENGISTU VISIT  
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TALKS INCLUDED THOROUGH DISCUSSION OF ERITREAN SITUATION  
BUT DENIES THAT THERE WAS ANY MENTION OF CUBAN TROOP PRE-  
SENCE IN ETHIOPIA. HE INTERPRETS OMISSION OF DIRECT REFER-  
ENCE TO SOMALIA IN MENGISTU VISIT COMMUNIQUE AS TOKEN OF  
SOVIET DESIRE TO AVOID EXACERBATING SITUATION IN HORN, BUT  
HE DOUBTS THAT THERE IS ANY PRACTICAL LIKELI-  
HOOD OF IMPROVEMENT IN SOVIET-SOMALI RELATIONS AT THIS

TIME. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING APRIL 18 CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, MFA THIRD AFRICA DEPT. COUNSELOR L.D. MIRONOV (SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA, DJIBOUTI) COMMENTED ON FOLLOWING TOPICS:

2. MENGISTU VISIT. (A) VISIT WAS TRULY A WORKING VISIT DESIGNED TO DISCUSS CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND OVERALL SITUATION IN HORN. THE VISIT WAS SECRET DUE TO DESIRE OF ETHIOPIAN SIDE. IN MIRONOV'S OPINION, THIS WAS CAUSED BY THE UNSTABLE LEADERSHIP SITUATION IN ADDIS ABABA. THUS, MENGISTU WAS SAFELY BACK IN ADDIS (VIA REGULAR AEROFLOT SCHEDULED FLIGHT) BEFORE COMMUNIQUE WHICH ANNOUNCED HIS VISIT WAS RELEASED (REF A).

(B) SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE. WITH A STRAIGHT FACE, MIRONOV FIRMLY DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY DISCUSSION OF CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA. U.S., HE SAID, AS A GREAT POWER SHOULD APPRECIATE SENSITIVITIES OF A SMALL COUNTRY IN TALKING ABOUT ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH A THIRD COUNTRY. TO EMBOFF'S EXPRESSION OF DISBELIEF, MIRONOV, WITHOUT HEAT, SIMPLY REPEATED HIS DENIAL.

(C) ERITREA. THE ERITREAN SITUATION WAS A MAJOR TOPIC OF DISCUSSION DURING THE TALKS. HOWEVER, IT WAS MENTIONED IN COMMUNIQUE ONLY INDIRECTLY DUE TO ETHIOPIAN SENSITIVITY OVER WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY AN INTERNAL MATTER. EMPHASIS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE COMMUNIQUE REFERENCE WAS, NONETHELESS, ON THE ANGLE OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT BECAUSE THIS (A) IS A REAL PROBLEM AND (B) SUCH A REFERENCE MADE PUBLIC MENTION OF THE TOPIC MORE PALATABLE FOR THE ETHIOPIANS. THE SOVIET SIDE LAID OUT ITS POSITION ON AN ERITREAN SETTLEMENT, I.E., FAVORING A POLITICAL, NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WHICH WOULD PROVIDE SOME FORM OF AUTONOMY FOR ERITREA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SOVEREIGN ETHIOPIAN STATE. THE ETHIOPIAN SIDE DID NOT DENY THAT, BASED ON THE APRIL 1976 PRINCIPLES, SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD BE DESIRABLE, BUT IT POINTED OUT THAT:

-- ERITREANS THEMSELVES, SUPPORTED BY OUTSIDE POWERS, DID NOT SEEM INTERESTED IN TALKING. RATHER, THEY CONTINUED TO FIGHT AND CONTINUED TO ESPOUSE SEPARATION FROM ETHIOPIA. SINCE PMAC WILL NEVER AGREE TO SEPARATISM, NEGOTIATIONS DO NOT SEEM TO BE PRACTICAL AT PRESENT TIME.

-- ANOTHER PROBLEM FOR NEGOTIATIONS WAS THE LACK OF UNITY AMONG THE VARIOUS ERITREAN ORGANIZATIONS. WITH WHOM EXACTLY WAS PMAC EXPECTED TO NEGOTIATE AND HOW? COMMENT: IN THIS CONTEXT, MIRONOV STATED THAT SOVIETS DO NOT HAVE RELIABLE LINKS WITH ERITREANS AND IMPLIED THAT PERHAPS ONE OF ARAB

COUNTRIES MIGHT SERVE ROLE AS GO-BETWEEN,. END COMMENT.  
(D) SOMALIA. SOMALIA WAS NOT MENTIONED BY NAME IN COMMUNIQUE DUE TO SOVIET DESIRE TO AVOID EXACERBATING SITUATION IN REGION, ALTHOUGH IT WAS CLEAR TO ALL THAT SOMALIA WAS STRONGLY, ALBEIT INDIRECTLY CRITICIZED.

3. MIRONOV CONTINUED ON THIS THEME, SWITCHING, HOWEVER, FROM THE CONTEXT OF THE MENGISTU VISIT TO THAT OF HIS OWN VIEWPOINT. WHILE SOVIETS ALWAYS HELD OUT HOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA, HE SAID, THIS DOES NOT SEEM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 08354

REALISTIC AT MOMENT IN LIGHT OF VICE PRESIDENT  
SAMANTAR'S STATEMENT OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT AND SIAD BARRE'S REMARKS IN PEKING.  
PARENTHETICALLY, MIRONOV REMARKED THAT SIAD'S DEPARTURE

FOR PRC IMMEDIATELY AFTER COUP ATTEMPT AGAINST HIMSELF WAS "RATHER STRANGE." OF PARTICULAR CONCERN WOULD BE PRC SUPPLY OF WEAPONS TO SOMALIA. COMMENT: WHEN EMBOFF QUESTIONED PRC POLICY WITH REGARD TO SUPPLY OF WEAPONS TO

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SOMALIA, MIRONOV LOOKED THOUGHTFUL AND AFTER REFLECTION, SAID QUESTION WAS "SCALE" OF WEAPONS DELIVERIES. IMPLICATION WAS THAT SOVIETS HAD INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO PRC DELIVERIES. END COMMENT.

4. ASKED FOR HIS "PERSONAL" VIEWS ON WAY OUT OF ERITREAN PROBLEM, MIRONOV EXPANDED AT SOME LENGTH ON POSSIBLE SUCCESS OF PMAC ORGANIZED "AGITPROP" CAMPAIGN AMONG PEASANTS IN ERITREA TO CONVINCE THEM OF ADVANTAGES UNDER PMAC ADMINISTRATION OF NEW AGRICULTURAL SITUATION AND OF FUTILITY OF SUPPORT FOR ARMED INSURRECTION. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT "RED TERROR" CAMPAIGN AS DESCRIBED IN LONDON TIMES WOULD LIKELY HAVE OPPOSITE RESULT TO WHICH MIRONOV REPLIED: (A) TIMES REPORTS WERE GREATLY EXAGGERATED FORM OF PROPAGANDA AND (B) (SOMEWHAT ILLOGICALLY) ETHIOPIAN LEADERSHIP FACED GENUINE PHYSICAL THREAT -- ESPECIALLY FROM ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION -- AND IN REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION ONE COULD NOT EXPECT LEADERSHIP PRONE TO VIOLENCE IN ANY CASE, TO REFRAIN FROM VIOLENCE.

5. EMBOFF CHALLENGED PLAUSIBILITY OF SOVIET MEDIA (AND MENGISTU VISIT COMMUNIQUE) FOCUS ON DANGER OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR ERITREANS. MIRONOV REPLIED THAT BASIC PROBLEM WAS "DEGREE" OF OUTSIDE SUPPORT. IF IT CONTINUED AT PRESENT LEVELS, HE SAID, SOVIETS CAN LIVE WITH THE PROBLEMS AND COMPLICATIONS WHICH RESULT. IF IT INCREASES OR IF ANY SORT OF FOREIGN "INTERVENTION" TAKES PLACE, THEN SITUATION COULD RAPIDLY DETERIORATE. ROLE OF SAUDIS IS CRUCIAL, HE SAID. HIS ONLY RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S CHARGE THAT FOREIGN INTERVENTION HAD ALREADY TAKEN PLACE WITH SOVIET AND CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT WAS TO DENY THAT SOVIETS WERE ENGAGED IN ANY COMBAT ROLE AND THAT CUBANS HAD DEPLOYED AGAINST THE ERITREANS.

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6. WITH REGARD TO OPENING OF SOVIET EMBASSY IN DJIBOUTI, MIRONOV SAID TECHNICAL TEAM WOULD SOON VISIT CITY TO LOOK AT PROPERTY AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS (PHYSICAL SECURITY WOULD BE A BIG CONSIDERATION, HE ADDED). HE SAID THAT, IN

TIME, THERE WOULD BE A RESIDENT SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN DJIBOUTI, BUT HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN THAT MIGHT BE. HE DID NOT FORESEE A RECIPROCAL ESTABLISHMENT OF A DJIBOUTI EMBASSY IN MOSCOW IN THE NEAR OR EVEN IN THE DISTANT FUTURE.

7. IN CLOSING, MIRONOV REPEATED HIS PREVIOUS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE MOOSE VISIT TO SOMALIA (REF B).

8. COMMENT: MIRONOV IS A MASTER AT DECEPTION AND WE DISBELIEVE HIS COMMENT THAT CUBAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA WAS NOT DISCUSSED DURING MENGISTU VISIT. EMBOFF TOOK MIRONOV TO TASK FOR MISLEADING HIM DURING MARCH 30 CONVERSATION WITH REGARD TO MENGISTU VISIT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH DJIBOUTI (REF C). ON FORMER POINT, HE SAID ETHIOPIAN DESIRE FOR SECRECY WAS "ABSOLUTE" AND HE COULD NOT EVEN HINT THAT VISIT WAS IMMINENT. ON LATTER, HE ATTEMPTED TO FUDGE (WITH VARIOUS TECHNICAL "EXPLANATIONS," BUT, FINALLY, HAD THE GRACE TO APOLOGIZE FOR ANY "MISUNDERSTANDING". TOON

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Type:** TE  
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